

*DO NOT ENTER
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Serial No.: 10/023,207

Docket No. KC-15966

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A method of making an absorbent nonwoven web, comprising:

a) producing a mass of thermoplastic, substantially continuous side-by-side or sheath-core multicomponent filaments by entraining molten thermoplastic polymers into an air stream, the filaments having a first polymer of lower melting point and a second polymer of higher melting point, the first polymer being at a surface of each filament;

b) introducing an absorbent material into the air stream to commingle the absorbent material within the mass of substantially continuous filaments;

c) cooling the filaments,

d) collecting the mass of filaments and commingled absorbent material onto a forming wire;

e) passing the collected mass of filaments and commingled absorbent material through a heater at a time and temperature sufficient to fully activate the first polymer of the filaments into a liquid state without activating the second polymer of the filaments, whereby the fully activated first polymer flows and wets a majority of the absorbent material and

f) densifying the collected mass of filaments and commingled absorbent material while the first polymer is fully activated.

2. (previously presented) The method of making an absorbent nonwoven web according to Claim 1, further comprising: densifying the fully activated mass of filaments and commingled absorbent material at a pressure, heat, and time sufficient to obtain a 0.05 g/cc to 0.3 g/cc density web.

3. (previously presented) The method of making an absorbent nonwoven web according to Claim 1, further comprising: cooling the activated and densified web